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THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD

MISSIONS

Christian Unity from the Point of View of Mission Work among Mohammedans

In the *Constructive Quarterly* for September, 1914, Mr. S. M. Zwemer writes on "A United Christendom and Islam." It seems that the Mohammedan Yellow press is exceedingly bitter against the Christians and that the Mohammedans of India and Egypt, at least, see that there is some danger for their faith in Christian propaganda. Unhappy divisions among Christians have always been the greatest help to the missionaries of Islam. When the Arabs invaded Western Asia and North Africa, they found a divided Christendom, a body of Christ torn and bleeding, while sects and factions were fighting about the hem of its garment. But now the ancient oriental churches are being reformed from within, while Protestant and Roman Catholic missions have been founded all over India and the Ottoman Empire. Dr. Zwemer indicates certain lines on which Protestants at least could co-operate. First, they ought to recognize unity in scholarship in the unity of this problem. This unity of scholarship which transcends differences in creeds and nationalities will greatly help in driving away provincialism and sectarianism. Then Protestants and other Christians ought to lay stress on what is common to their diverse creeds. Thirdly, the mission field ought to be surveyed and occupied with strategy.

A Record Circulation of Bibles

The year 1913 was the best in the history of the British and Foreign Bible Society. Sales amounted to 8,958,223 copies, an increase of over a million compared with the previous year which had been a record year. The society has published the Scrip-

tures in 456 languages. The demand for the Scriptures in China is most remarkable. Through the Y.M.C.A. a large number of Gospels have been distributed among the British troops and every soldier or sailor who promised to read a chapter daily has been presented with a pocket New Testament. There is now a great revival of religious earnestness in England and in France and this is one of the redeeming side issues of an otherwise disastrous war.

Chinese Students and Christianity

A most interesting report has come regarding the work of Sherwood Eddy in China. In Tientsin there was a meeting of 2,000 students in the Guild Hall, several hundred being turned away. In addition, there was a special meeting for 1,500 schoolboys and 1,800 business men, not to mention women students. Over 1,000 inquirers expressed their desire to join Bible classes in order to make a study of Christianity. The sincerity of these inquirers may be judged from the fact that out of the five hundred Confucian students enrolled in Bible classes last year, two hundred were received as probationers.

In Peking Mr. Eddy was received by President Yuan Shi Kai and Vice-President General Li Yuan Hung. Evangelistic meetings were held within the Forbidden City, just in front of the imperial palace, next to the sacred altar where the emperor annually worshiped the "Spirit of the Land." Four thousand students came to the hall and punctuated the speeches with enthusiastic applause. On the second day 3,000 were present, and on the third day more than 1,000 more signed cards of inquiry to join Bible classes. Five hundred schoolboys and 350 business men also indicated their

desire to join Bible classes. Twenty thousand men were said to have attended Professor Robertson's lectures on science the week preceding Mr. Eddy's visit.

Altogether 2,000 inquirers expressed their desire to study the Bible in classes. The total attendance at the evangelistic meetings in Peking was about 14,000. There are many other indications of a great Christian movement among the Chinese student class.

The Religion of Suicides

The Imperial Statistical Bureau of Berlin publishes the average of death by suicide per 100,000 people among different religious and non-religious sections of the German nation. The ratio is: among Protestants, 31; among Roman Catholics, 37; among Jews, 40; among the religionless, 605 (*Missionary Review of The World*).

A Parallel to the History of Israel

On the upper reaches of the river Niger in Western Soudan there is a heathen tribe called the Bambara, numbering about half a million. Although the Mohammedans are very numerous in the Western Soudan, the Bambaras have remained very faithful to their beliefs. They believe that the growth of their corn depends upon the good will of spirits of the land which have to be propitiated by special ceremonies before plowing of the fields. Mohammedan settlers of a foreign race who dwell among the Bambaras have come to practice the same rites for fear that otherwise their crops would fail. As a result these Mohammedans have lost much of their faith

in Allah. Traveling Moslem preachers argue the case with them and try to show them that Allah is the only ruling power over nature and that they ought to rely upon him only. This situation offers a striking parallel with the conquest of Canaan by the Hebrews. The incoming settlers found in that country a prosperous community which worshiped local gods called Baalim. These were supposed to bless the crops and the produce of vineyards and orchards. To insure success in their farming operations, the Hebrews worshiped commonly the local Baals or Yahweh in the old sanctuaries of the Baalim and practically the same rites. Against this the prophets preached firmly (see for instance Hos. 2:8, 21, 22; Ezek. 16:19), showing that Yahweh was the real giver of all good crops, bringing fertility into the land.

Medical Missions in the East

The September number of the *Spirit of Missions* deals with the medical missions of the Episcopal church. The Christian Association of the University of Pennsylvania, an undenominational society, has undertaken to erect a medical school and to support one or two of its professors, the work being part of St. John's University, Shanghai. The medical school of St. John's College was begun on a small scale in 1881 with eight students. In Tokyo, the premier of Japan, Count Okuma, and several leading gentlemen in Japanese society have heartily indorsed the new plans for the development of St. Luke's Hospital, Tokyo. Medical missions are probably the most effective of Christian agencies.

CHURCH EFFICIENCY

Ministers and Newspapers

The relation of pastors to the daily press is discussed in the *Congregationalist* by Rev. Ernest Bourner Allen, of Toledo, who had a large business experience in connection

with newspapers before entering the ministry.

There is a common notion, says Mr. Allen, that nothing draws like the gospel. Inferentially, if the gospel were preached,